

WITH TRUMPET AND DRUM.

(Dedication for a forthcoming book of child's verse.)

With big tin trumpet and little red drum,
Marching like soldiers, the children come:
It's this way and that way they circle and
leap—
My but that music of theirs is fine!
This way and that way, and after awhile
They march straight into this heart of
mine:
A sturdy old heart, but it likes to succumb
To the blare of that trumpet and beat of that
drum!

Come on, little people, from east and from hall—
This heart it hath welcome and room for you
all!
It will sing you its songs and warm you with
love,
As your dear little arms with my arms in-
tertwine:
It will rock you away to the Dreamland
above—
Oh, a jolly old heart is the old heart of
mine!
And jolly still it is bound to become
When you blow that big trumpet and beat that
red drum!

So come, though I see not the dear little face
And hear not the voice in this jubilant place,
I know he is happy to bid me enshrine:
His memory deep in my heart with your
play—
Ah me! but a love that is sweeter than mine
Holds my boy in its loving to-day!
And my heart it is surely—so, little folk, come,
March to and make merry with trumpet and
drum!

—Eugene Field, in Chicago News.



CHAPTER XX—CONTINUED.

"Oh," I cried in thought, my soul
wrenched with agony, "why does he
love me when I do not and cannot love
him? Why must I cause him to suffer
what I am forced to bear? Why, ah,
why, must we both pass through this
terrible affliction of loving and being
unloved?"

Why, I wondered, could I not love
Charles Cornell? I knew that he was
good and noble, and in every way the
peer of Will Hanley. I knew that as his
wife I should never have an ungratified
wish if he had the power of administering
to it. I knew that the great study
of his life would be to advance my hap-
piness and add to my comfort. He
would do for me all that Will Hanley
could do, and maybe more. Then why
must I refuse his love and cling to one
who ignored me? Why must I throw
away the substance and hold hopelessly
to a shadow? I asked myself this
question, and reason answered that I
ought not, but love said I must, and
love always has its way.

Again I hear Charles Cornell's voice.
He has drawn closer to me and is
speaking very low and earnestly. I feel
his breath on my cheek, and I hear the
wild throbbing of his heart. I think
how happy that heart is now, and how
soon its joyful pulsations must cease.
I wish I could run away—somewhere—
and die.

"Agnes," he is saying, "the one thing
I want to complete my happiness is
your love—you. I want you to be
mine—my wife."

He paused and drew nearer, and I
thought he was waiting for me to
speak; but I could not utter a word.
My tongue clove to the roof of my
mouth and I trembled visibly. I
felt that it was wicked to let him go
on, and cruel to deceive him with the
false hope my silence inspired, but I
could not help it. Again he spoke.

"Agnes," he said, "I love you, and I
want you for my own. Will you be my
wife?"

Still I was silent. I was able to
speak now, but I was loth to say
what candid and duty required. His
courage grew stronger and bolder. In
an ecstasy of delight he grasped my
hand, crying:

"You will, Agnes, for you are silent.
You do love me and you will be my
wife."

As he spoke he drew me to him, and
attempted to kiss me. I realized then
that I must speak and act. I drew away
from him as far as I could and took my
hand from his.

"No, no, no," I cried, "I cannot, I
cannot."

He started, and for a moment looked
in my face blankly. His features paled,
flushed and paled alternately; then
again lighted up with a new hope. He
clasped my hand once more and held it
with a vice-like grip. I tried to wrench
it away, but he tightened his hold until
I winced with pain. He leaned towards
me until his hot breath scorched my
cheek. In a hoarse, strange whisper he
addressed me.

"No, Agnes," he said, pleadingly, "do
not say that. For the love of Heaven
do not. You do not mean it. You surely
cannot. You will be my wife, won't
you?"

I wept. How hard it was to resist his
pleading! How hard to deny him after
all his kindness and loving care! How
hard to mar and cripple his life! Yet, I
must. I do not love him and I could
not marry without love. I became quite
calm directly by strenuously exerting
myself to that end, and looking up into
his eyes answered him quietly.

"No, Mr. Cornell," I said, "I cannot
marry you, because I would wrong
both you and myself if I did so when
I did not love you. I know I am not
worthy of such love as yours, and that
in putting it away from me I am put-
ting away a noble love and a noble
heart, but duty compels me to act as I
do."

"Then you do not love me?" he
questioned calmly, but oh, so sadly.
His was the calmness and sadness of
despair.

forget me. Think how unworthy I am
of your love and close me out of your
thoughts."

"Never, never. I have never loved
another woman, and I never shall cease
to love you. I shall never forget you,
Agnes, for your image is engraved on
my heart for all eternity. You do not
know what a deep, impressionable
nature mine is. I never forget."

He paused, and, turning his head,
stared a long time out across the wide
prairie. I knew he was suffering the
most exquisite pain, for his face was
strangely blanched and drawn while
heartrending sighs escaped him. At
last he turned again to me.

"Agnes," he asked, "are you inexor-
able? Will nothing I can do or say
win your heart to me? Remember my
suffering is bitter and my disappoint-
ment great. Remember my whole
future happiness is at stake. Give me
a thread of hope, and no matter how
slender it is I will wait cheerfully,
even for years, doing everything in my
power to win your love. Remember,
Agnes, how much depends on you, and
do not deny me everything."

"I can promise you nothing but my
friendship and gratitude," I replied,
"because that is all I have to give.
Do to Heaven I could give you
more, for then we would both be
happier. But my heart is not my own.
I cannot control it, and I cannot
promise you anything from its love.
We must part and you must forget me."

"This is bitter," he cried. "You do
not know how cruel and bitter it is."

"Oh, God," I cried inwardly, "do I
not? Have I not tasted the same bitter
draught? Am I not drinking it to the
very dregs even at this moment? Aye,
I know only too well how cruel it all
is. The same pains that rend his heart
are rending mine. The same disap-
pointment that lies on him, crushing
him down into the darkest despair, is
lying on me with equal weight. The
same black, cheerless, hopeless future
that spreads out before him spreads out
before me. Aye, indeed, I know all he
feels, all he suffers, but I dare not tell
him so."

We rode on for some distance. He
evidently saw the futility of urging his
suit further, and I realized that every
word either of us spoke only seemed to
add to our mutual pain. Finally I
said:

"Let's return."

"Yes," he replied, "we had as well go
back. There is no pleasure in driving
now."

He turned about and we retraced our
journey. What a silent, sad ride it was,
and how glad I felt when it was over.
He helped me to alight at my door, and
holding my hand an instant, said:

"Miss Owens, remember that I am
still your friend, and that what I have
said must not separate us. Good-by."

Then he sprang to his seat and drove
away. I looked after him, and oh, how
my heart swelled with pity and sym-
pathy.

CHAPTER XXI.

MY THOUGHTS TRICKLE.

For a month after Mr. Bernard's re-
turn there was nothing in our relations
of striking importance. At least I
thought there was not at the time. He
remarked the alteration in my appear-
ance and manner, saw how pale and
sad I was, but, aside from inquiring if
I was not well, made no effort to dis-
cover from me the cause of the change.
He was more considerate of me than he
had ever been, and I thought he put
himself out a great deal to favor me
with attentions and kindnesses. It
seemed that he could not do enough for
me, and he was so assiduous in his at-
tentions that I became embarrassed
and would have escaped them if I
could.

At the store he showed such a de-
cided preference for me, and so much
regard and consideration for me, that
in time the other employes began to
remark it, and sometimes as I passed I
saw them exchange smiles and nods
which I did not take as being at all
complimentary. I understood what
their thoughts were, and I chafed
under the knowledge, yet I could do
nothing to change matters. I knew
that they thought it very queer that
one in Mr. Bernard's position should
show such interest in a poor girl like
me, and I was aware that they ascribed
improper motives as the reason why he
did so. Yet I was powerless to stay



MR. BERNARD ENTERED.

his attentions, since there was nothing
improper in them, and as they plainly
emanated from his solicitude for my
welfare.

I did not believe that he had any im-
proper designs, for never once since his
return had he reverted to the theme
with which he had so startled me on
two of three occasions before he went
away. It was my opinion that in his
absence he had thought the matter
over and seen how wrong his conduct
had been, and that now he was trying
to atone for it, and make me feel that
he sincerely regretted it.

So a month passed. Then one day
there came a terrible awakening. I was
passing through the store early in the
morning on my way to the office, and
the lady clerks, who had not begun
their duties yet, were collected in a
huddle near the door. As I passed them
they began tittering among themselves
and some remarks fell from their lips
which stung me through and through.

I stopped, and, turning upon them,
asked:

"What do you mean by such lan-
guage?"

They made no reply, but a suppressed
giggle ran through the company. I was
hurt and exasperated.

"Why do you speak of me as you did
just now?" I demanded.

"Why do you give us cause to speak
of you so?" one of them queried in re-
turn.

"I do not give you cause," I replied.
"I have done nothing."

"Oh, no, of course not," she answered.
"I suppose you think it's nothing. But
we beg leave to differ with you. We
think it's a great deal."

"What have I done?" I asked.

"What have you done? Well, you've
done so much that I can't afford to re-
main in this store another day if you
stay. We know very well that Mr.
Bernard is not so good to you for noth-
ing. It's hardly likely that he would
be, I'm sure."

"That isn't," observed another. "I
think it is perfectly shameful, for my
part."

"I can't help Mr. Bernard's atten-
tions," I urged.

"Oh, no, of course. Do you suppose I
couldn't?" the first speaker said. "Do
you suppose he's going to force his at-
tentions on anybody day after day when
he is shown that they are not wanted?"

"Hardly," said another, with a laugh.
I made no further reply, but went at
once to the office, where I sank down in
my seat and, laying my head on the
desk, burst into tears. The other em-
ployes never had liked me, I knew, and
for weeks they had managed to make
me very miserable while I was at the
store. Miss Perkins, the leader in the
conversation just given, was especially
sour toward me, and I believed that
whatever suspicions the others entertain-
ed were generated by her.

I had been in the office near an hour,
I think, and was still weeping when
Mr. Bernard entered. He appeared
greatly concerned and at once entreated
me to tell him what my trouble was.

"Do not hesitate to speak out," he
urged, seeing that I was slow to speak.

"If there is anything I can do to help
you, I am ready and anxious to hear it."

"You can do nothing," I replied,
choking back my tears, "except to let
me go home."

"Go home?" he repeated. "Not back
to your father's house?"

"No, to Mrs. Bond's," I answered.

"Ah!" and he appeared very much re-
lieved. "Why, certainly, you can go.
Are you not feeling well, Agnes?"

He approached and laid his hand
caressingly on my head, causing me to
start while a shudder ran over me.
That act of familiarity, together with
the tender tones in which he addressed
his last question, filled me with alarm.
I did not answer him, and he went on:

"You can go home, of course. I see
you are in great trouble, and are in
need of friendly advice, so I'll take you
home myself, and when you are calmer,
and feel like it, you may confide to me
the secret of this great sorrow and I
will help you to bear it. Come with me
and we will take a carriage."

I went because I knew not what else
to do. I was incapable of thinking
then, and I had no power to oppose the
man. He led me very gently through
the store, and more than once I was
conscious of a suppressed titter as we
passed the counters. My cheeks burned
with indignation, and I was glad when
we reached the street. A carriage came
in a moment and I was handed in. Mr.
Bernard followed and took a seat by
my side.

"Now," he said, when we were going,
"I should like to know what has hap-
pened. Will you tell me?"

"Not now," I replied. "I must have
time to think."

"I think I can guess something of it,"
he continued, seemingly paying little
notice to what I said. "I believe the
people at the store have been saying
something that has wounded you. Am
I not right?"

I assented by a nod of my head.

"I thought so," he remarked. "I
guessed it from the tittering I heard as
we passed. I knew there was mali-
ciousness at the bottom of that giggling.
I'll give them something when I return
that will change their tune. Tell me
what they said to you and I'll settle
with them for it."

"Not now," I said again.

"Well, when you feel inclined, then,"
he replied. "I believe that Miss Per-
kins is at the bottom of the affair.
She's a vicious, spiteful woman and
needs toning down occasionally. I'll
get to the bottom of the affair and have
the whole matter sifted, and so rest as-
sured that you will be righted."

When we reached Mrs. Bond's I went
directly to my room, leaving Mr. Ber-
nard and Mrs. Bond in the hall. An
hour later Mrs. Bond came up, and my
door being unlocked she walked in.
She was in an unpleasant humor, and
before she had hardly seated herself she
broke out with:

"Well, Miss Owens, you seem to have
a wonderful lot of tears, judging from
the amount you shed. I never see so
much cryin' in all my life as you have
done since you came here."

"You never saw anybody whose life
was so sad and miserable," I replied.

"Well, that may be," she answered.
"I ain't got nothin' to say about that.
But whose fault is it if your life is dark
and miserable? You can't blame any-
body but yourself, for it's nobody but
you that makes it that way. You know
that well enough."

I looked at her in amazement, unable
to comprehend her meaning. How was
I responsible for all the misery I had
suffered from infancy up? How was I
accountable for the life of suffering to
which I had been born? What had I
to do with my lone, friendless condi-
tion? How could I avoid the knots and
gnarls that saddened my life and made
me the most wretched creature on
earth? How was I to blame for my ex-
istence being a long series of troubles,
disappointments, persecutions and sor-
rows? Had I made it so? Had I the
power to make it otherwise?

to it. We've got to have an understand-
ing, and I want it now."

"I do not understand you," I said.

"Well, perhaps you will directly,"
she replied. "I want an explanation of
your conduct in connection with Ber-
nard, and I must have it, or else you
must leave this house. I told you once
before that I could not afford to have
the reputation of this house ruined, and
I won't. I've kept still as long as I can
in justice to myself, and I won't keep
still any longer. I won't have decent
people drove away on your account, and
I won't have any goings-on here that
makes people talk. Scandal is some-
thing that I'm not going to be mixed up
in and I'm not going to have my house
mixed up in it."

"What?" I cried. "Are the people
here talking about me?"

"Are they?" she replied. "Well, I
should think they are. And it looks to
me like they're not to be blamed for it,
either. They have cause to talk."

I was angry now, and starting up, I
cried:

"Mrs. Bond, that is false. I have not
given you or anyone else cause to
slander me. You know I haven't."

"Maybe I do," she answered, a little
disdainfully. "Maybe havin' a married
man here to see you every few days, an'
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